

PUT UP OR SHUT UP

and swagger to make a serious run at GMC post season titles

James Nosek | Staff Writer

Boys' basketball coach Greg Richards believes now is the time for the Comets to get over the hump. Despite winning nearly 55 percent of their games in the GMC since joining the conference in 2008 and compiling an impressive 16-6 record a year ago, the Comet head coach has the team focused on one goal this year-- "be the first."

"Be the first' is something that if you instill over a long period of time, hopefully, you start to believe in it and do it," Richards said. "We are really excited for the season because of how hard these guys have worked in the offseason; hopefully we'll be the first."

Senior forward Darin Harris said that Richards has used this motto loosely in previous years, it's always been a goal for the Mason program to win a GMC title, but this year it is something they are really running with.

"['Be the first'] is something we have attached to; we made it our own," Harris said. "I know it definitely can be our year, we were short last year, and don't want to come up short like that again."

When Mason made the transition from the FAVC four years ago, they looked for better competition, and since they have been a part of the GMC, that wish has become a reality. After winning 12 FAVC titles, including a stretch of three in a row from 2004-2007, the transition to a new league has been tough, but Richards said he is happy with the results, despite



We've got your back: senior Darin Harris (center) returns with strong supporting team members senior Todd Reed, senior Tim Reale and junior Drew Matula (left to right).

not winning the conference.

"I've been doing this for a long time, and been through league changes," Richards said. "So I'm not disappointed... it takes time to adjust."

As the 2011-2012 season kicks off tomorrow night at home against Lebanon, the Comets may look a little different on the offensive end of the floor but on the

defensive side of the ball they will still rely on that same stingy man-to-man defense which has been the trademark of Richard's teams.

Offensively, the Comets look to be more versatile, trying to get more fast break opportunities to go along with their famous "flex" offense.

"We want to spread teams out," senior Tim Reale said. "We have adopted Kentucky's 'pen and pitch' offense as we look to create more matchup problems."

The Comets will be led by seniors guard JD Sprague and Harris. And even though they will provide a bulk of the production for the team, Richards said he is relying on the seniors, like Reale and center Michael Van Kleunen, to make major contributions.

"This years' senior class has shown the leadership qualities of a championship winning team," Richards said.

As the Comets look towards the season, there is only one goal at hand built around three words and that is

something that is particularly special to this year's team, according to Reale.

"Sometimes a team will get a motto and just say it and don't back it up," Reale said. "We're not just saying ['be the first'] to say it, it means a lot more to us, and it will help us achieve our goal of...winning a GMC title."

photo by Conyne Hogan

TRADING PUNCHES

Army - Navy,
Ohio State - Michigan,
Auburn - Alabama
Texas - Texas A.& M.
With many rivalries throughout the world of sports, college rivalries still are important to college students and fans. What is the most storied college football rivalry in America?



Joseph Spencer

Michigan vs. Ohio State is the most storied college rivalry in America. Woody

Hayes went for two when his team was beating Michigan by more than 30, the reason why "he couldn't go for three." Michigan's current coach, Brady Hoke, will not wear red or say the words Ohio State. These two school hate each other more than any other and always provide a classic game on the Saturday of the season every year.

What makes the Army-Navy rivalry so powerful is the fact that these guys want to kill each other on the field, but at the end of the day, once graduation occurs, these patriots take pride in joining forces and fighting for this country. I think that's pretty special, they're fighting for the same team after schools over. It's like in Top Gun, "Maverick" and "Iceman" hate each other when they're in school but once they "graduate" and defend this country, they are one.



James Nosek

The most storied college football rivalry in America really just depends on where you live. Most anyone in Ohio or Michigan would say that it's Ohio State vs. Michigan, just like anyone from Texas would say Texas vs. Texas A & M. And that's true for all sports. Because Ohio State fans hate Michigan fans. So of course they think that they have the deepest rivalry ever, because their hatred runs deep.



Katelyn Cain